843 If a pregnant woman looks fixedly at a person, or for that
784 matter if he stares at her, her child will be pretty or the reverse,
789 depending on that person's appearance. She therefore tries not to look at or be seen by an ugly individual.[6] She also avoids looking at a fisherman, lest her child will have a restless nature.[7] Neither must she watch a horse shaking its head, or her child will be constantly subject to similar behaviour.[8] If, on the other hand, she happens to see a galloping steed, her pregnancy will last twelve months.[9] Upon observing a mouse, an expectant mother must spit and touch her abdomen; otherwise her child will be born with a mark resembling a mouse on its body. A fire in the village may have a similar effect; if a woman is frightened by it and does not spit immediately, her unborn child will have the mark of a flame on its body. Should a pregnant woman eat an apple at the approach of her confinement, warts are likely to appear on the face of her child;[10] and if the apple be a stolen one, the child will grow up to be a thief.[11]

843 Definite signs enable one to predict the sex of an unborn child. If the prospective mother eats her meals with a good appetite, for example, it is a sign that she will have a boy; otherwise her child will be a girl. According to another indication, if the woman is to have a boy large spots appear on her face before her confinement, but if her face remains smooth and white
844 she is sure to have a girl.[12] The destiny of the child, and even
777 of the parents, can be foretold from certain omens. If birth
787 occurs around noon the child is destined to be unfortunate, while a baby born at daybreak will be lucky.[13] The crowing of a cock during birth is a bad omen. The birth of twins presages disaster, *e.g.*, the imminent death of one of the parents or the

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[6] Kolessa, J., "Narodziny i chrzciny, wesele i pogrzeb u ludu ruskiego," *Zbiór Wiadomości do Antropologii Krajowej*, xii (Kraków, 1889) 117; Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 4.

[7] Kaindl, *ibid.*, p. 4.

[8] Kolessa, in *Zbiór Wiad. do Anir. Kraj.*, xiii, 117.

[9] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 4.

[10] Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, ii, 1.

[11] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 4.

[12] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 174.

[13] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 4.

23: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1939 RD1 Ukraine RD1

844 777 787 impoverishment and consequent ruin of the homestead.[14] According to another version, the birth of twins or triplets is a general punishment from God.[15] Since eating two potatoes, two apples, or two plums would result in her having twins, a pregnant woman is most careful to abstain therefrom.[16] A child born before the ninth month indicates that the woman has been unfaithful to her husband.[17]

843 844 The Ukrainian peasant woman, as a rule, goes about her daily tasks uninterruptedly until the very onset of labour pains. The mountainee. woman in particular, owing to her robustness, seems to give birth with an unusual ease and unconcern. Besides attending to her routine work in the house, she is occupied at a period very close to her confinement with such work as milking cows, constructing fences, and pitching hay. Only a woman who is constitutionally weak takes to bed when she feels that her accouchement is not far off. Others often deliver their babies wherever they happen to be at the time—in the barn milking, in the field, or anywhere else. Sometimes a woman goes up to the attic, and after a few moments hands her baby down to someone below and then climbs down after it.[18] Women have even been known to return from market with a newborn baby in their arms and a sack full of purchased articles on their backs. In order to avoid leaving blood spots behind her in case she delivers her baby outside of the home, a woman who expects to give birth at any moment often puts on a pair of men's trousers under her dress when leaving the house.

844 Birth itself is surrounded by a mass of practices, again mostly imitative in nature, which are concerned rather with the well-being of the infant than with preserving the health of the mother.[19] When the hour of confinement arrives the husband repairs to call the midwife (*baba*), who is usually a woman with

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[14] Kolessa, J., "Ludowy wiruwania na pidhirju," *Etnograficznyj Zbirnyk*, v (Lwów, 1898), 83.

[15] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 5.

[16] Kolessa, in *Etnograficznyj Zbirnyk*, v, 83.

[17] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 4. [18] Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, ii, 2.

[19] Vowk, C., *Studii z Ukrainskoi Etnografii ta Antropologii* (Praha, n.d.), p. 188.

844 obstetrical experience. The first act of the *baba* is to give the mother a generous dose of whisky to ease her pains. Then she makes her walk thrice around the table, opening and loosening all closed, covered, or tied objects, such as benches, shelves, closets, and boxes; this has the effect of easing the birth of the child. This done, the midwife takes consecrated wreaths of herbs and holds them over the fire, to fumigate the confined woman with their smoke. If all this fails to have the desired effect, and the delivery proceeds with difficulty, the *baba* runs to the church and begs the sexton to lend her the girdle worn by the priest at divine service; returning home, she winds this about the woman and the child is then born with the greatest of ease.[20]

A woman usually delivers her baby in either a kneeling or a standing position. At times, when the case is especially difficult, she is led around in the room by two women, who grasp her under the arms. When delivery begins, the mother kneels down upon a cover spread out on the floor and deposits the
844 baby upon it.[21] The midwife takes the child as soon as it is
777 born, and holding it head down, beats thrice with the soles of its feet on the centre beam of the ceiling, so that it will grow up as strong as the beam. She then makes the sign of the cross over it, sprinkles some holy water on its head, and gives it a warm bath. If the baby is a girl, she puts into the bath some honey, mint, and other sweet-smelling herbs, so that it may grow up to be a sweet and pleasant girl.[22] The water of the bath is not poured out until the following morning; otherwise "the sleep of the child will be carried out along with it."[23]

Having dried the child at the fire, bundled it up, and put it on the oven to sleep, the midwife prepares a bed for the mother
844 at the corner of the oven. Under the sheet she puts some hay
784 consecrated with holy water, and on the bar over the bed she hangs a large sheet to separate the bed from the rest of the room.
789 Before the mother lies down, however, the *baba* takes care to tie a piece of garlic on her chest and to place near her, on the

[20] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, i, 211.

[21] *Ibid.*, iii, 174; Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, ii,

[22] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 175.

[23] Kolessa, in *Zbiór Wiad. do Antr. Kraj.*, xiii, 117.

23: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1939 RD1 Ukraine RD1

844 bed, a knife and some keys, because iron has the power to
784 drive away evil forces.[24]

789 A precaution never forgotten is to light a candle immediately after the delivery; otherwise the baby, not being baptized as yet, would surely be harmed by lurking evil forces. Under no circumstances must the light be extinguished, at least not until holy water is obtained from the priest and sprinkled over the mother, the baby, and the entire room.[25] Besides this essential precaution, a multitude of other means are taken to protect the child and assure its healthy growth. As soon as possible after birth, for example, there is tied to the right wrist of the infant a little sack, called *szkalytoczka*, which contains the following articles: a piece of garlic—to make the child as sharp as this vegetable; a piece of clay from the oven—to make it as immune to the evil eye as is the oven; a piece of coal—to make the eyes of whoever casts upon it an evil glance burn like coal; some dust from the tracks of a dog—so that people will stare at it no more than they do at a dog's tracks. A small wooden cross is likewise hung on the infant's neck.[26] A mother must not turn her back upon her baby lest it turn yellow,[27] or be taken by a superhuman woman, the *diwa-baba*,[28] in exchange for a brat of hers. Nothing in the house may be given away on the day of birth, or the child will be given to sleeplessness. Whoever takes a glance at a newborn infant must spit immediately—to make sure that the child has not been bewitched.[29] Throughout the first night, some member of the family must keep watch, so that nothing may befall the child.[30]

777 A person's destiny, it is believed, is determined immediately upon his birth, at which moment twelve invisible judges convene on the window-sill near the table. Eleven of them pronounce

[24] *Idem.*

[25] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 5. [26] Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, ii, 4.

[27] Kolessa, in *Zbiór Wiad. do Antr. Kraj.*, xiii, 118.

[113] [28] Regarding the nature of this mysterious woman, see Koenig, S., "Supernatural Beliefs among the Galician Ukrainians," *Folk-Lore*, xlix (Sept. 1938), 274.

[29] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, pp. 4–5.

[30] Kolessa, in *Zbiór Wiad. do Antr. Kraj.*, xiii, 118.

23: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1939 RD1 Ukraine RD1

851 574 in drinking, imitate the motions of a person cutting straw, while in the case of a girl the motions are those of a woman washing clothes.[50]

Towards the end of the dinner the *baba* drinks an individual toast to each of the godparents and throws what remains in the glass at the ceiling. She then hands them each a goblet of whisky on a plate. After offering a toast and emptying his goblet, each puts a few coins on the plate, which the midwife takes individually to the mother. In some localities it is customary for the oldest godmother to put the infant upon a pillow and carry it around from guest to guest while holding a candle in her other hand; a younger godmother follows her with a plate, upon which everyone, beginning with the father, places some money as a gift for the child; the midwife, meanwhile, makes little bouquets of herbs and distributes them among the guests, receiving from each a few coins for herself.[51]

The christening festivities are marked by great hilarity, drinking, and the singing of songs designed for the occasion. When begun in the evening, they are prolonged far into the night, the men sometimes spending the whole night at the party; when begun in the morning, they last throughout the day. The parents keep open house. People come and go all day, bringing gifts and drinking to the health of the mother and child. The festivities may be extended to the second and even the third day—celebrations lasting a whole week are by no means rare—the parents being expected to supply the thronging visitors with food and drink.[52] Indeed, christening parties, along with wedding and funeral celebrations, have been the major cause in the impoverishment of many a peasant household.[53]

844 The midwife is formally dismissed on the third day, when she comes to carry out the hay and to change the bedding. She receives in payment a few coins, a loaf of bread, and, in the case of a firstborn child, also a piece of linen.[54] In a little ceremony, which marks the dismissal, the mother thrice pours water over

[50] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, i, 209–210; *Przemyskie*, p. 50.

[51] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, i, 212; *Przemyskie*, p. 50.

[52] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, i, 210. [53] *Idem.*

[54] Kolessa, in *Zbiór Wiad. do Antr. Kraj.*, xiii, 119–120.

844 the hands of the midwife and dries them with the linen presented to the latter. Then both women shake hands over the child, and beg one another three times for forgiveness for the troubles each has had to undergo.[55]

846 783 The mother is considered strictly unclean for three days, the period of the midwife's attendance. Nevertheless, she usually leaves her bed on the second or third day and performs her routine tasks about the house. She must not, however, go farther than thirty-five steps from the dwelling, lest she defile the fields which she might pass.[56] Indeed, she may not even take these few steps without carrying a knife with her.[57] The period during which the mother is not considered entirely clean lasts from three to six weeks, depending upon the locality. At the termination of this period a formal purification ceremony (*wywid* = leading out) is performed in the church by the priest. On the day of the ceremony, the midwife comes to take the mother to church. The latter dresses up in her best clothes, and is sprinkled by the midwife with holy water. Taking the baby in her arms, and carrying a knife, a few keys, some garlic, and a piece of bread, she follows the midwife to the church. Arriving at the entrance, she kneels with the child in her arms and awaits the priest. When he enters, she follows him to the small altar where the christening took place some weeks before. Here the priest, after performing a special ceremony, pronounces her entirely clean.[58]

852 608 574 After the purification rite, often as much as two years later, comes a ceremony which, more than any other, reveals the closeness of the bond that must have once existed between godparents and child. The parents of the child inquire of the godparents whether they will accept a present of *kolaczy*, twisted loaves of wheat bread, from which the ceremony is named *kolaczyny*. If the godparents agree, as they invariably do, the parents set a day for the celebration. Should the godparents have acted in the same capacity at the baptism of other children,

[55] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 6.

[56] Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, ii, 7.

[57] Kolessa, in *Zbiór Wiad. do Antr. Kraj.*, xiii, 119.

[58] *Idem.*